

REFERENCE: P/17/1083/FUL

APPLICANT: Western Power Distribution (South Wales) Plc
Avonbank, Feeder Road, Bristol BS2 0TB

LOCATION: **Bridgend Grid 132kV Substation off Great Western Avenue
Bridgend CF31 1NN**

PROPOSAL: Extension to existing 132kV grid substation to accommodate new 33/132kV switchroom building; 2.4m high steel palisade security fencing with 3.6m electric fencing behind; internal access road & gravelled surface

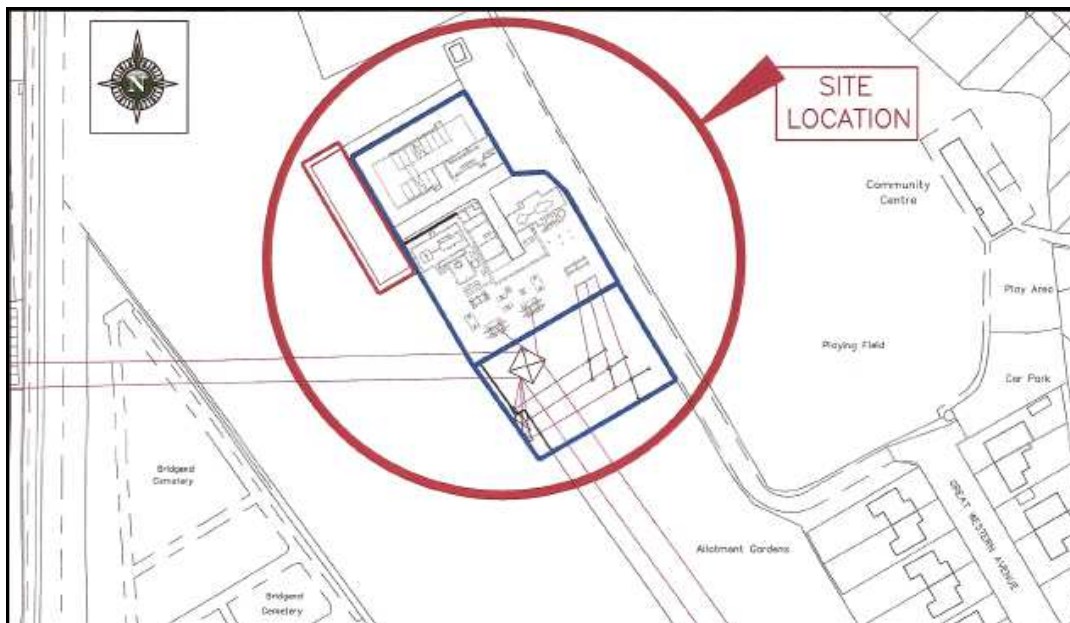
RECEIVED: 22nd December 2017

SITE INSPECTED: 25th July 2017 (under planning application reference P/17/571/FUL)

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Full planning permission is sought by Western Power Distribution (South Wales) plc (WPD) for the extension to the existing grid substation at Bridgend Grid Substation, off Great Western Avenue, Bridgend. WPD is a Licensed Electricity Supply Operator defined in Section 6(2) of the Electricity Act 1989. The existing substation at Bridgend is of major importance to the electricity supplies around a vast area surrounding the Bridgend district.

The proposal comprises an extension to the west of the existing substation, as shown in the plan below:



The extended area will provide space to erect a building which provides the opportunity to upgrade the existing substation, erected in the 1970s, by transforming the incoming voltage from 132,000 (132kV) to 33,000 (33kV) for distribution to the local network, providing power to the wider Bridgend area. The existing infrastructure is in urgent need of upgrading and modernisation.

The switch room building proposed to be erected to the west of the existing site will measure 6 metres in width, 19.3 metres in length and 4.6 metres in maximum height. The building will be finished with facing brick elevations proposed in new burntwood red rustic 0269 colour, with anthracite RAL7016 grey roof, to match the existing buildings at the application site, as shown below:

Application Number

P/17/1083/FUL



Scale 1:2,500

Date Issued:
07/03/2018

Development-Mapping
Tel: 01656 643176

Mark Shephard

Corporate Director-Communities

Communities Directorate,
Bridgend County Borough
Council, Civic Offices,
Angel Street,
Bridgend CF31 4WB.

O/Drive/Plandraw/new MI layouts/
Committee DC Plan

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Cyngor Bwrdeistref Siro





The proposal also includes the installation of a 3.6 metre high electrified steel palisade fence with stainless steel rivets and the extension of the internal access road to provide access to the new building, which has a gravelled surface.

As part of the proposal, the existing switchroom building, finished in profiled steel clad elevations and located along the north western boundary of the application site, will be removed following the commissioning of the new equipment. The existing infrastructure cannot be dismantled because WPD needs to maintain the supply of electricity to its customers during the construction and testing stage. There is no available option of temporarily installing switchgear equipment off site whilst the existing circuit breakers are removed and a permanent switch room building is constructed.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is located within the Primary Key Settlement of Bridgend, as defined by Bridgend County Borough Council's adopted Local Development Plan (2013). It lies approximately 385 metres to the North West of Coity Road (B4181). The site is accessed via a single width private access track off Great Western Avenue.

The proposed development area is within the Regeneration and Mixed Use Development Site Coity Road Sidings, Bridgend, as defined by Policy PLA3 of the Local Development Plan (2013). The site is allocated for regeneration and mixed use schemes which includes 140 residential units (COM1(4)) an employment function (REG1(3) already developed) and a Park and Ride facility to serve Wildmill Train Station (PLA7(21)).

The existing site is characterised as industrial and houses a number of pylons and electrical equipment enclosed within a palisade fence, as shown in the photograph below:



RELEVANT HISTORY

Application Reference	Description	Decision	Date
P/12/807/FUL	Change of use to B1/B8 mainly containerised storage	Conditional Consent	20/12/2012
P/13/534/FUL	Develop site for use as storage facility	Conditional Consent	16/01/2014
P/14/326/RLX	Relax Condition 1 of P/13/534/FUL	Conditional Consent	26/06/2014
P/14/641/FUL	Installation of underground electricity line	Conditional Consent	30/10/2014
P/14/777/FUL	Installation of an underground electrical line	Unconditional Consent	30/12/2014
P/14/850/FUL	Underground high voltage cable for solar farm (amendment to route approved under P/14/641/FUL)	Conditional Consent	16/02/2015
P/15/279/FUL	A small scale standby electricity generation plant in individual sound proof containers	Refused - Dismissed On Appeal	17/07/2015
P/15/582/FUL	Small scale standby electricity generation plant in individual soundproof containers and associated infrastructure and works	Withdrawn	12/04/2015

P/15/812/FUL	Small scale standby electricity generation plant in individual sound proof containers	Refused	11/11/2015
P/15/781/FUL	Underground high voltage electricity cable for solar farm (amendment to route approved under P/14/850/FUL) (retrospective application)	Unconditional Consent	15/01/2016
P/16/76/RLX	Change of use to B1/B8 mainly containerised storage	Withdrawn	31/03/2016
P/17/571/FUL	Extension to existing substation to accommodate new 33/11kV switchroom building, 2.4m high palisade security fencing with 3.6m high electric fencing behind, internal access road and gravelled surface	Withdrawn	04/10/2017

PUBLICITY

This application has been advertised through direct neighbour notification and the erection of a site notice. An advertisement was also published in the Glamorgan Gem newspaper on 11 January 2018.

No representations have been received within the consultation period which expired on 1 February 2018.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

CONSULTEE

COMMENTS

Bridgend Town Council
11 January 2018

No objection.

Wales & West Utilities
5 February 2018

No objection subject to the inclusion of the recommended informative notes.

RELEVANT POLICIES

The relevant policies and supplementary planning guidance are highlighted below:

Policy PLA1	Settlement Hierarchy and Urban Management
Policy PLA3	Regeneration and Mixed Use Development Schemes
Policy SP2	Design and Sustainable Place Making
Policy PLA7	Transportation Proposals
Policy SP9	Employment and the Economy
Policy REG1	Employment Sites
Policy SP12	Housing
Policy COM1	Residential Allocations in the Strategic Regeneration Growth Areas

Supplementary Planning Guidance 08
Draft Coity Sidings Development Brief

Residential Development

In the determination of a planning application, regard should also be given to the local requirements of National Planning Policy which are not duplicated in the Local

Development Plan. The following Welsh Government Planning Policy is relevant to the determination of this planning application:

Planning Policy Wales Chapter 2	Local Development Plans
Planning Policy Wales Chapter 3	Making and Enforcing Planning Decisions
Planning Policy Wales Chapter 4	Planning for Sustainability
Planning Policy Wales Chapter 7	Economic Development
Planning Policy Wales Chapter 8	Transport
Planning Policy Wales Chapter 9	Housing
Planning Policy Wales Chapter 10	Retail and Commercial Development
Planning Policy Wales Chapter 12	Infrastructure and Services
Planning Policy Wales TAN 4	Retail and Commercial Development
Planning Policy Wales TAN 18	Transport

APPRAISAL

This application is presented to the Development Control Committee because it represents a departure from the Local Development Plan (2013).

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The application site is located within Coity Road Sidings, Bridgend, a site identified under Policy PLA3(3) within the Local Development Plan (2013) as a Regeneration and Mixed Use Development Site. The site offers opportunities for comprehensive development to take place over the plan period to help meet the visions and objectives of the Local Development Plan (2013) and the development of the site will result in the provision of comprehensive residential, employment and commercial development, whilst providing new transportation, community, education and recreation facilities to serve the community.

Coity Road Sidings is a 6.5 hectare brownfield site which offers the opportunity for a mix of uses including residential, a retained area of employment, recreation (including the possible expansion of adjacent allotment facilities) and a proposed Park and Ride facility, in connection with the existing Wildmill Railway Halt.

Policy COM1(4) of the Local Development Plan (2013) identifies Coity Road Sidings as a Residential Allocation which will bring forward the provision of an estimated number of 140 dwellings which includes 28 affordable units.

Policy PLA7(21) of the Local Development Plan (2013) also identifies the application site as a strategic transportation improvement area which will provide opportunities to reduce congestion and provide enhanced facilities for walking, cycling and public transport within the County Borough. A Park and Ride Facility is identified to provide an effective interchange between cars and public transport to facilitate a reduction in the length and number of car-borne journeys.

In 2015 planning consent was refused for a standby generating facility on land to the north of the current site. However, this proposal covered a much larger area and if developed would have sterilised a significant part of the allocated land.

The current proposal is for a much smaller extension to an existing substation.

The proposed extension to the existing substation facility cannot be considered temporary in nature nor can it be said to be employment generating, however, it is noted that the new structure and subsequent removal of the existing switchroom would provide betterment in terms of visual amenity, which would be more compatible with the future residential development of the Coity Road Sidings Development Brief.

The proposed improvement to the existing substation ensures continuity of energy supply for Bridgend and the wider area. WPD have demonstrated within the Supporting Statement (received 22 December 2017) that there is no available land within the existing compound for the switchroom to be erected and the existing equipment cannot be removed prior to provision of the new equipment. The only feasible location for the building to be erected is the proposed location, due to the technical constraints of the site.

The Joint Housing Land Availability Study (2017) states that Coity Road Sidings designated site has a deliverability of 30 units in 2021, 40 units in 2022 and 70 units thereafter. Although the overall developable area will be reduced if this application is approved, it is considered that the proposal will not unduly jeopardise the future residential scheme given its residential capacity and the location and limited scope of the substation extension.

The proposal is therefore considered to be broadly compatible with Policies COM1(4), PLA7(21) and PLA3(3), as defined by the Local Development Plan (2013), and is acceptable in principle.

DESIGN CONSIDERATION

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 9)(2016) (PPW) at paragraph 4.11.9 stipulates the following:

the visual appearance of proposed development, its scale and its relationship to its surroundings and context are material planning considerations.

Policy SP2 of the Local Development Plan (2013) stipulates that *all development should contribute to creating high quality, attractive, sustainable places which enhance the community in which they are located, whilst having full regard to the natural, historic and built environment.* Design should be of the highest quality possible and should be appropriate in scale, size and prominence.

The proposed erection of a switch room building is not considered to be so detrimental to the character and appearance of the area to warrant a refusal on such grounds. The proposed building is modest in nature and is of an appropriate size and scale, in accordance with Policy SP2 of the Local Development Plan (2013). It is designed to match the existing buildings within the application site and is proposed to be finished in materials that are of an appropriate prominence. Given its position and size, it is considered that it would not be an overly prominent feature in the wider landscape and is therefore of an appropriate prominence, in accordance with Policy SP2 of the Local Development Plan (2013).

It is also considered that the addition of palisade fencing will not have a detrimental impact on the visual appearance of the existing substation and it is considered to be compatible with the functional character of the surrounding area.

The removal of the existing switchroom on the north western boundary of the application site will significantly improve the visual amenities of the area and the proposal is therefore considered to represent an improvement to the character and appearance of the wider area.

The proposal is therefore considered, on balance, to be acceptable from a design perspective, compliant with Policy SP2 of the Local Development Plan (2013).

HIGHWAYS

As referred to above, the development site lies within Coity Road Sidings, Bridgend, a site identified under Policy PLA3(3) within the Local Development Plan (2013) as a *Regeneration and Mixed Use Development Site*.

Policy PLA7(21) of the Local Development Plan (2013) identifies the application site as a strategic transportation improvement area which will provide opportunities to reduce congestion and provide enhanced facilities for walking, cycling and public transport within the County Borough. A Park and Ride Facility is identified to provide an effective interchange between cars and public transport to facilitate a reduction in the length and number of car-borne journeys.

Whilst the developable area is within the demarcated strategic transportation improvement area, it is considered that the proposal would not prejudice the implementation of the Park and Ride Facility or walking, cycling and public transport routes because the access road is capable of being realigned, as shown in the Potential Realignment of Access Road Through Coity Sidings Site plan received 22 December 2017.

No objections have been raised by the Transportation, Policy and Development Section, however, the implementation of Policy PLA7(21) is not prejudiced as a result of this proposal and the proposal is considered acceptable from a highway safety perspective.

The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable from a highway safety perspective in accordance with Policy PLA11 of the Local Development Plan (2013).

AMENITY

Given the location of the existing substation, the proposed development is not considered to impact the existing levels of amenity and as such, no concerns are raised.

CONCLUSION

The proposal is out of accord with the provisions of the adopted Local Development Plan. Planning law dictates that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless there are material circumstances that suggest otherwise.

In this case the proposal would occupy a small extension to an existing facility that is necessary to provide a much needed upgrade to this important infrastructure facility.

The development will not prejudice the future development of the overall allocation in the Local Development Plan.

Furthermore, the proposal raises no other issues in terms of amenity, design or highway safety.

RECOMMENDATION

(A) That the application be referred to Council as a proposal that represents a departure from the Development Plan which the Development Control Committee are not disposed to refuse as the development forms part of urgent improvements to the existing grid electricity substation off Great Western Avenue serving Bridgend which will not have a significant impact on the Regeneration and Mixed Use Development Site as allocated under Policies PLA3(3), COM1(4) and PLA7(21) of the LDP.

(B) That if Council resolve to approve the proposal, the following conditions be attached to the consent:-

1. The development shall be carried out in accordance with drawing numbers "BDG0112"

and "A 73210 Issue 3" received 22 December 2017.

Reason: To avoid doubt and confusion as to the nature and extent of the approved development.

2. The building shall be completed with 'new burntwood red rustic 0269' elevations and shall have an 'anthracite RAL 7016' roof, in accordance with the samples received 27 February 2018.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed materials of construction are appropriate for use on the development so as to enhance and protect the visual amenity of the area.

3. No later than 6 months after the beneficial use of the building and apparatus commencing, the existing switchroom on the north western boundary of the application site shall be removed in its entirety and all associated waste removed from the site.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenities.

4. * THE FOLLOWING IS AN ADVISORY NOTE NOT A CONDITION

Wales & West Utilities may be directly affected by these proposals. The applicant must contact Wales & West Utilities to discuss the impact of the development on their apparatus and subsequent requirements. Should diversion works be required, these will be fully chargeable.

MARK SHEPHARD
CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

Background papers
None